

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for notifying an offline global computer network user of an online interaction in which the offline user could participate, the method comprising the steps of:
 - specifying notification criteria of the offline user;
 - monitoring activities occurring on the global computer network;
 - comparing the activities to the notification criteria; and
 - if the activities satisfy the notification criteria,
 - forwarding an offline communication to the offline user, wherein the offline communication notifies the offline user of the online interaction.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the online interaction is one of a chat room, a game site, an instant messaging service, an auction, and a call made over the global computer network.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the online interaction is a chat room and the notification criteria comprise at least one of:
 - a number of users logged into the chat room,
 - a particular user logs into the chat room, and
 - a request that the offline user log into the chat room, wherein the request is sent by a user logged into the chat room.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the online interaction is a game site and the notification criteria comprise at least one of:
 - a number of users logged into the game site,
 - a particular user logs into the game site, and
 - a request that the offline user log into the game site, wherein the request is sent by a user logged into the game site.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the online interaction is an instant messaging service and the notification criteria comprise an event in which a buddy from a buddy list of the offline user logs onto the instant messaging service.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the online interaction is an auction site and the notification criteria comprise at least one of:

entry of a bid that exceeds a high bid submitted by the offline user, and
a number of bids submitted within a certain duration.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the online interaction is a call over the global computer network and the notification criteria comprise an event in which the offline subscriber receives an unanswered call over the global computer network.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of specifying further comprises specifying contact information of the offline user, and the step of forwarding comprises retrieving the contact information of the offline user and forwarding the communication to the offline user in accordance with the contact information.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the contact information comprises a communication device type and an address of the communication device.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the contact information comprises a plurality of communication device types of the offline user, addresses for each of the plurality of communication device types, and an order in which to attempt the plurality of communication device types.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of forwarding the offline communication comprises forwarding the offline communication to one of a wireline telephone, a wireless

telephone, a caller identification device, a wireless access protocol device, a one-way pager, and an interactive pager.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indication from the offline user as to whether the offline user will join the online interaction; and

reporting the indication to online users with whom the online interaction would take place.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of forwarding the offline communication comprises forwarding the offline communication to one of a wireline telephone and a wireless telephone,

wherein the step of receiving the indication comprises receiving input of the offline user through an interactive voice response unit, and

wherein the step of reporting the indication comprises transmitting the indication to the online users through the global computer network.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of receiving the indication comprises receiving audio input of the offline user and converting the audio input to text for transmission through the global computer network to the online users.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of receiving the indication comprises receiving audio input of the offline user, recording the audio input in a digital audio file, and transmitting the digital audio file through the global computer network to the online users.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of forwarding the offline communication comprises forwarding the offline communication to one of an interactive pager and a wireless access protocol device,

wherein the step of receiving the indication comprises receiving input of the offline user from the interactive pager or the wireless access protocol device, and

wherein the step of reporting the indication comprises transmitting the indication to the online users through the global computer network

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the input comprises one of a standard message and a customized message.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the offline communication states the notification criteria, states that the notification criteria has been satisfied, and states a time and a date that the notification criteria was satisfied.

19. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of requiring the offline user to provide a passcode before forwarding the offline communication.

20. A system for providing notification of an online interaction occurring on a global computer network, the system comprising:

- (a) a plurality of network users, wherein the plurality of network users performs activities on the global computer network related to the online interaction;
- (b) an offline global computer network user; and
- (c) a service provider in communication with the plurality of network users and the offline global computer network user,

wherein the service provider is in communication with the plurality of network users through the global computer network,

wherein the service provider has a communication interface through which the service provider is in communication with the offline global computer network user,

wherein the service provider is adapted to monitor the activities of the plurality of network users,

wherein the service provider is adapted to compare the activities to criteria for notifying the offline global computer network user of the online interaction, and

wherein the service provider is adapted to notify the offline global computer network user through the communication interface if the activities satisfy the criteria.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the communication interface is adapted to notify the offline global computer network user through one of a wireline telephone, a wireless telephone, a caller identification device, a wireless access protocol device, a one-way pager, and an interactive pager.

22. The system of claim 20, wherein the service provider is adapted to receive a response from the offline global computer network user, and to transmit the response to at least one of the plurality of network users.

23. The system of claim 20, wherein the communication interface is adapted to notify the offline global computer network user through one of a wireline telephone and a wireless telephone,

wherein the communication interface includes an interactive voice response unit with which to receive a response from the offline global computer network user, and

wherein the service provider is adapted to transmit the response to at least one of the plurality of network users.

24. The system of claim 20, wherein the activities comprise at least one of chat room activity, game site activity, instant messaging activity, auction activity, and activity related to calls over the global computer network.

25. The system of claim 20, wherein the criteria comprise one of:

- a number of users logged into one of a chat room and a game site,
- a particular user logs into one of a chat room and a game site,
- a request that the offline global computer network user log into one of a chat room and a game site,
- an event in which a buddy from a buddy list of the offline global computer network user logs onto an instant messaging service,
- entry of an auction bid that exceeds a high bid submitted by the offline global computer network user,
- a number of bids submitted to an auction within a certain duration, and
- an event in which the offline subscriber receives an unanswered call over the global computer network.

26. The system of claim 20, further comprising a database accessible to the service provider, wherein the database contains the criteria.

27. The system of system of claim 26, wherein the database contains contact information defining how to notify the offline global computer network user.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein the contact information comprises a communication device type and an address of the communication device.

29. The system of claim 26, wherein the database contains a passcode that the offline global computer network user must provide to receive the notification.

30. A system for providing notification of an online interaction occurring on a global computer network, the system comprising:

- (a) an offline global computer network user;

(b) a plurality of network users in communication with the global computer network;

(c) a site in communication with the plurality of network users through the global computer network,

wherein the plurality of network users perform activities related to the online interaction on the site,

wherein the site is adapted to monitor the activities of the plurality of network users, and

wherein the site is adapted to compare the activities to criteria for notifying the offline global computer network user of an online interaction; and

(d) a service provider in communication with the site and the offline global computer network user,

wherein the service provider is in communication with the site through the global computer network,

wherein the service provider has a communication interface through which the service provider is in communication with the offline global computer network user, and

wherein the site is adapted to notify the service provider if the activities satisfy the criteria in response to which the service provider is adapted to notify the offline global computer network user through the communication interface.

31. The system of claim 30, further comprising a database accessible to the site, wherein the database contains the criteria.

32. The system of claim 31, wherein the database contains contact information of the offline global computer network user, and wherein the site passes the contact information to the service provider.

33. The system of claim 31, further comprising a second database accessible to the service provider, wherein the second database contains contact information of the offline global computer network user.

34. The system of claim 30, wherein the communication interface is adapted to notify the offline global computer network user through one of a wireline telephone, a wireless telephone, a caller identification device, a wireless access protocol device, a one-way pager, and an interactive pager.

35. The system of claim 30, wherein the service provider is adapted to receive a response from the offline global computer network user, and to transmit the response to at least one of the plurality of network users.

36. The system of claim 30, wherein the communication interface is adapted to notify the offline global computer network user through one of a wireline telephone and a wireless telephone,

wherein the communication interface includes an interactive voice response unit with which to receive a response from the offline global computer network user, and

wherein the service provider is adapted to transmit the response to at least one of the plurality of network users.

37. The system of claim 30, wherein the activities comprise at least one of chat room activity, game site activity, instant messaging activity, auction activity, and activity related to calls over the global computer network.

38. The system of claim 30, wherein the criteria comprise one of:

a number of users logged into one of a chat room and a game site,

a particular user logs into one of a chat room and a game site,

a request that the offline global computer network user log into one of a chat room and a game site,

an event in which a buddy from a buddy list of the offline global computer network user logs onto an instant messaging service,

entry of an auction bid that exceeds a high bid submitted by the offline global computer network user,

a number of bids submitted to an auction within a certain duration, and

an event in which the offline subscriber receives an unanswered call over the global computer network.

39. The system of claim 30, further comprising a plurality of offline global computer network users,

wherein the service provider is in communication with the plurality of offline global computer network users through the communication interface,

wherein the site contains a list of subscribers who want to receive the notification of the online interaction, wherein the subscribers are part of the plurality of offline global computer network users,

wherein the criteria comprises a request from the plurality of network users for at least one of the subscribers to log onto the site, and

wherein the service provider is adapted to notify the at least one of the subscribers through the communication interface.

40. A system for notifying an offline global computer network user of an online interaction in which the offline user could participate, the system comprising:

(a) a means for specifying notification criteria of the offline user;

- (b) a means for monitoring activities occurring on the global computer network;
- (c) a means for comparing the activities to the notification criteria; and
- (d) a means for forwarding an offline communication to the offline user, wherein the

offline communication notifies the offline user of the online interaction.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the online interaction is one of a chat room, a game site, an instant messaging service, an auction, and a call made over the global computer network.

42. A method for notifying an offline global computer network user of an interaction in which the offline user could participate, wherein the interaction occurs on a global computer network site that facilitates real-time online interactions between two or more users, the method comprising the steps of:

- establishing conditions under which to notify the offline user;
- monitoring activities on the site;
- comparing the activities to the conditions; and
- if the activities satisfy the conditions, notifying the offline user via an offline communication of the interaction.

43. The method of claim 42, wherein the site is one of a chat site, a game site, and an auction site.

44. The method of claim 42, wherein the global computer network is the Internet.

45. The method of claim 42, wherein the conditions are one of:
when the number of users logged into the site exceed a preset amount,
when a particular user logs into the site, and
when a user logged into the site requests that the offline user log into the site.

46. The method of claim 42, wherein the offline communication is one of a wireline telephone call, a wireless telephone call, a message sent to a caller identification device, a message sent to a wireless access protocol device, a message sent to a one-way pager, and a message sent to an interactive pager.

47. The method of claim 42, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indication from the offline user as to whether the offline user will join the interaction; and

reporting the indication to users logged into the site.

48. A method for notifying an offline global computer network user of an interaction in which the offline user could participate, wherein the interaction occurs on an instant messaging service, the method comprising the steps of:

associating a group of users with the offline user;

monitoring whether users of the group of users log into the instant messaging service;

if a user of the group users logs into the instant messaging service, notifying the offline user via an offline communication of the interaction with the user.

49. The method of claim 48, wherein the offline communication is one of a wireline telephone call, a wireless telephone call, a message sent to a caller identification device, a message sent to a wireless access protocol device, a message sent to a one-way pager, and a message sent to an interactive pager.

50. The method of claim 48, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indication from the offline user as to whether the offline user will join the interaction; and

reporting the indication to the user.

51. A method for notifying an offline global computer network user of activities occurring on an auction site, the method comprising the steps of:

establishing conditions under which to notify the offline user;

monitoring the activities on the auction site;

comparing the activities to the conditions; and

if the activities satisfy the conditions, notifying the offline user of the activities via one of a telephone and a caller identification device.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein the conditions are one of:

when a bid is entered that exceeds a high bid of the offline user, and

when the number of bids entered with a duration exceeds a preset amount.

53. The method of claim 51, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indication from the offline user as to whether the offline user will log onto the auction site and participate in the activities; and

reporting the indication to users logged into the auction site.

54. The method of claim 51, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a high bid from the offline user via the one of a telephone and a caller identification device; and

reporting the high bid to users logged into the auction site.

55. A method for notifying an offline global computer network user of a call over a global computer network to the offline user, the method comprising the steps of:

monitoring the global computer network for calls to the network address of the offline user; and

if a call from a calling party to the network address is unanswered, notifying the offline user of the unanswered call via an offline communication.

56. The method of claim 55, wherein the offline communication is one of a wireline telephone call, a wireless telephone call, a message sent to a caller identification device, a message sent to a wireless access protocol device, a message sent to a one-way pager, and a message sent to an interactive pager.

57. The method of claim 55, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indication from the offline user as to whether the offline user will log onto the global computer network and accept the call to the network address; and
reporting the indication to the calling party.